DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 510 EC 210 361

AUTHOR Steckelberg, Allen; Vasa, Stanley F.
TITLE Preservice and Inservice Training Program To Prepare Teachers To Supervise and Work More Effectively with Paraprofessional Personnel.
PUB DATE 31 Mar 88
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (66th, Washington, DC, March 28-April 1, 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; *Disabilities; Education Majors; Higher Education; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; *Personnel Management; Skill Development; Special Education; *Staff Role; *Teacher Education; *Teaching Methods; Tutors; Undergraduate Study; Units of Study; Volunteers

ABSTRACT

The use of auxiliary personnel, which includes paraprofessionals, volunteers, and peer- and cross-peer tutors, has become prevalent in special education programs. Teacher education programs need to focus on the skills required by teachers to utilize these assistants appropriately and effectively. This paper outlines one method for incorporating an instructional module into an undergraduate teacher curriculum. The training module's components include: rationale for utilization of auxiliary personnel, legal and ethical constraints upon use, description of roles and responsibilities of teachers and auxiliary personnel, issues in training auxiliary personnel, and methods for supervising paraprofessionals. It is recommended that the competencies be achieved through an intact instructional module delivered primarily in one course, and guidelines are provided for appropriate placement of the module in the curriculum. Student competencies upon completion of the module are listed. The instructional methodology utilizes student reading materials, lecture presentations, class discussions, class assignments, and assessment of student knowledge. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED297510

Preservice and Inservice Training Program to Prepare Teachers to Supervise and Work More Effectively With Paraprofessional Personnel

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Paper Presented

International Council for Exceptional Children

Allen Steckelberg
Stanley F. Vasa

Project TAP
Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

March 31, 1988

Washington, D.C.

EC 210 361

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Allen Steckelberg
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Preservice and Inservice Training Program to Prepare Teachers to Supervise and Work More Effectively With Paraprofessional Personnel

The use of auxiliary personnel in special education classrooms has been strongly advocated in the special education and mental health literature (Boomer, 1982; Jenkins & Jenkins, 1981; Greer, 1978; Blessing, 1967). Purported benefits of the use of auxiliary personnel include more creative planning, better development of materials, increased individual attention, improved quality of instruction, better use of teacher skills, cost effectiveness, and enriched instruction (Cruickshank & Haring, 1957). A number of data based studies have shown that the use of auxiliary personnel can be effective in a broad range of settings including early childhood programs (Shortinghuis & Froman, 1974), institutional settings (Guess, Smith & Ensminger, 1971), mental health programs (Cowen, Dorr, Sandler & McWilliams, 1971), behavior management (Cohen, 1968; Gardner, 1972), resource rooms (McKenzie & Houk, 1986), speech programs (Costello & Schoen, 1978; Scalero & Eskenazi, 1976), severely handicapped programs (Rouse & Farb, 1974), remedial programs (Manning, 1979), and vocational programs (Dean, 1977).

In conjunction with reports of the successful use of auxiliary personnel, estimates of the number of nonprofessional personnel employed in special education programs have increased dramatically during the last decade. A series of surveys of state educational agencies conducted by Pickett (1984) shows an increase from an estimated 27,000 special education paraprofessionals in 1972 to 150,000 in 1984. The use of auxiliary personnel appears to be a viable option for extending and enriching services to handicapped students. A continued increase in their utilization is projected (Pickett, 1984; Frith & Lindsey, 1982).

Concerns with the use of auxiliary personnel do exist. McKenzie and Houk (1986) point out concerns about the manner in which they are used and trained. They further cite a charge given by the National Education Association to teacher-training institutions to more fully prepare future teachers to effectively use paraprofessionals (1982). Frith & Lindsey (1982) attribute this

lack to the fact that very few states have a prescribed aide-training and supervisory process. Frith & Lindsey further note that 97% of respondents to a national survey felt that teachers needed training in the proper use of aides and volunteers in the classroom. It appears that the use of auxiliary personnel in special education is a long-term trend which needs to be addressed by teacher education programs.

Organization of Module in Relationship to the Total Teacher Education Program

Teacher training program graduates should demonstrate knowledge and competence concerning the child, curriculum and instructional materials, instructional strategies, behavior management techniques. In addition, special education professionals must demonstrate skills in the assessment and prescription of instruction based on the individual needs of students. Teachers should have as a result of a training program:

1) a philosophy of education consistent with the needs of handicapped students;
2) knowledge of legal and ethical aspects which serve as protection to students and their families and knowledge of professional responsibilities;
3) ability to work with other team members including other professionals, parents, and paraprofessionals and volunteers;
4) knowledge of the relationship of educational activities to the community;
5) ability to continue their own education, development and professional growth; and
6) attitudes and skills to contribute to the maintenance and development of the teaching profession.

Decisions about particular components of a teacher preparation curriculum should be based on duties actually being performed in special education programs, state and national standards for teacher preparation, and on improving the process of teaching and education. Development of instruction related to the use of auxiliary personnel should be accomplished within this framework.

A number of authors have discussed the changes which the use of auxiliary personnel has necessitated in the role of the special education teacher. Boomer (1980) examines the changing role of the special education teacher through characterization of the teacher as a program manager. Education is a well-planned, coordinated effort and the teacher's role is to plan and organize that effort. The program manager defines program goals and manages resources to reach those goals. Paraprofessionals are one of these program resources. Abilities identified as necessary to functioning as program managers include skills in interviewing and selecting, orienting, supervising, and evaluating paraprofessionals.

Pickett (1986) views teachers' roles as becoming more complex and difficult, stating that the term "classroom teacher" no longer adequately defines or embodies the expanding responsibilities teachers have in education. Roles of teachers include coordination of information provided by interdisciplinary teams, implementation of the IEP, assessment of developmental and performance level of individual students, design and delivery of instruction, assessment of the impact of teaching and modification of programs based on student progress. In addition to programmatic duties, responsibilities include supervising and coordinating the work of paraprofessionals and other support personnel. Duties include: 1) setting goals and planning for adults in the classroom, 2) scheduling and coordinating classroom activities, 3) directing and assigning tasks to paraprofessionals, 4) use of problem solving to improve efforts of the team, 5) assessing the on-the-job performance of paraprofessionals, and 6) developing techniques to improve the skills and performance of paraprofessionals.

White (1984) supports the conceptualization of the teacher as program manager and further elaborates that teachers administer and direct the contribution of paraprofessionals, interns, volunteers, and other helpers to meet the needs of students. Advantages of this shift include increased individual attention, ability to organize the classroom differently and more effectively, enhanced instructional creativity, liaison with other programs, emotional support, relief from non-instructional chores, and improved credibility in the community. New skills required

of the teacher include learning how to train adults and development of competence in personnel management.

Teachers should also be involved in a number of professional roles dealing with school policy issues which contribute to the use of auxiliary personnel. These include the development of criteria for selection and assignment of auxiliary personnel, development of job descriptions, definition and implementation of adequate supervision, establishment of evaluation guidelines and planning, and implementation of long-range staff development programs. Teachers should have the ability to think critically about the issues that affect the education of handicapped students and contribute to decisions which affect the programs in which they operate.

Teachers are also faced with a number of issues on a more direct basis. These include:

1) making daily assignments and scheduling activities,
2) designing instruction for another adult to carry out,
3) monitoring student progress and making instructional decisions when not present,
4) providing corrective feedback to paraprofessionals,
5) developing and documenting on-the-job training,
6) evaluating of paraprofessional performance, and
7) dealing with problems and differences.

Issues and Constraints

The difficulty in adequately preparing teachers during an undergraduate degree program has been evidenced by the ongoing discussion of five-year teacher preparation programs. Emphasis is also currently refocusing on providing beginning teachers with a strong liberal arts background. Curriculum in higher education is also delivered by a number of faculty who have a variety of personal and professional interests. It is evident that the focus of the undergraduate program in special education must be on entry level skills. These skills should be chosen so that they raise an awareness of important issues and lead to further self-development on the part of the beginning teacher.

Curriculum content must also be relevant to the current perceived needs of the participants. At this point in their preparation, students have not yet determined their own roles in the classroom. Special attention must be given to demonstrating the importance and practicality of dealing with paraprofessional issues. With these constraints in mind, the proposed undergraduate instructional module is designed within a framework of six to nine clock hours of instruction.

Components of the Training Module

The training module addresses a number of issues critical to the success of the beginning teacher in working with auxiliary personnel.

1. Rationale for utilization of auxiliary personnel. The teacher is required to make professional judgements about proper utilization of auxiliary personnel. Some basis should be established for looking at purposes for using auxiliary personnel. Beginning teachers need to focus on the benefits and critical factors in improving instruction using auxiliary personnel, to present the benefits of employment of auxiliary personnel, and to advocate for their appropriate utilization in the school program. Sound rationale for making educational decisions on systematic theories and assumptions is needed by entry-level teachers in special education.

2. Legal and ethical constraints upon use. The primary issue is the potential abuse in deploying auxiliary personnel in special education programs. Beginning teachers should be aware of state laws and rules which regulate the use of auxiliary personnel in special education programs. Laws and professional ethical standards relate to appropriate roles of the teacher and the non-professionals and to school policies and training requirements.

3. Description of roles and responsibilities of teachers and auxiliary personnel. A key component of the beginning teachers' ability to work effectively with auxiliary personnel is a clear understanding of the role of the teacher and the role of auxiliary personnel. This is necessary in both avoiding abuses and making the best possible use of available resources. The literature also discussed the importance of clearly defining the roles of the auxiliary personnel as part of effective personnel management (Escudero & Sears, 1982)

4. Issues in training auxiliary personnel. Although auxiliary personnel play an extensive role in delivering instruction in special education programs, they receive minimal training at best. Surveys of teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators conducted (Vasa, Steckelberg, & Ronning, 1982) indicated that approximately 80% of paraprofessionals received no training prior to employment or on an ongoing basis. Graduates should be able to identify viable components of a training program for paraprofessionals.

5. Identify methods for supervising paraprofessionals. Supervision of auxiliary personnel includes a wide variety of skills. The focus of this component is on several practical methods for beginning the process of delegating responsibility to auxiliary personnel and properly supervising their performance. Elements include: use of leadership skills, orientation to classroom rules and procedures, clarifying roles and assignments, scheduling activities, developing lesson plans for the tutor, use of appropriate data collection methodologies needed to make sound judgments about student progress, techniques for handling conflicts between the teacher and auxiliary personnel, and purposes and techniques for evaluating auxiliary personnel.

Integration in Program

Competencies dealing with auxiliary personnel can be achieved through an intact instructional module delivered primarily in one course or can be infused throughout the curriculum. The advantage of an infusion method is that skills can be built upon in a spiraling effect. The advantages of the intact instructional module are clarity and accountability for content and delivery. Since the intact module does not preclude continued application of the content in other courses and the further development of skills, it is the preferred method of delivery, particularly when introducing new components into the curriculum.

Several criteria should be used in deciding where the delivery of the module is most appropriate:

1) The use of auxiliary personnel is universal to all types of special education programs for the mildly handicapped. The focus of the information and skills contained in the module is also at a general awareness and beginning application level.
2) The readiness of students for the information should be considered. Students should have some opportunity to have a general knowledge of how classrooms operate and the typical duties of the teacher.
3) The delivery of the module should be within the current structure of the teacher training program and should match the type and level of content provided in the course.
4) Access to practicum activities which allow some application and generalization of the information to actual settings would be desirable.

Use of auxiliary personnel does not exist in isolation from other aspects of teaching in special education. Skills such as professional ethics, designing good lesson plans, observing and recording data, and using assessment data in making instructional decisions also relate to effective use of auxiliary personnel. In addition, use of auxiliary personnel can assist in many aspects of instruction. The module is most appropriately delivered in a core course which also deals with these issues. For these same reasons, discussion of auxiliary personnel should take place in other courses as well. In particular, competencies related to the use of auxiliary personnel should be included in student teaching experiences.

Student Competencies

Upon completing the module students will be able to:

1) describe potential benefits and constraints on the use of auxiliary personnel in special education programs;
2) demonstrate knowledge of the legal and ethical requirements in the use, training, and supervision of auxiliary personnel;

3) identify appropriate roles for auxiliary personnel in a special education program;

4) identify appropriate roles for teachers in supervision auxiliary personnel;

5) develop a model job description for auxiliary personnel;

6) identify components of a training program for auxiliary personnel; and

7) identify strategies for use in supervision of auxiliary personnel.

Module Content and Instructional Methodology

In developing the instructional methodology and content a number of factors need to be taken into consideration:

1) including content and materials at a level appropriate to students' needs, based on prior knowledge, current perception of need, and opportunity to apply and use the information;

2) allowing for active participation and individualization in the learning process;

3) making available the greatest amount of information in a short period of time; and

4) providing feedback to the students on their knowledge.

A variety of instructional methodologies is utilized in the module including student reading materials, didactic lectures, discussion of issues, class assignments, and assessment of knowledge.

Student Reading Materials. Two supplementary books are provided for students. The first, a "Guide for the Utilization of Auxiliary Personnel", includes text of state laws and regulations pertaining to use of auxiliary personnel, statements by Nebraska Professional Practices Commission and general ethical considerations in the use of paraprofessionals. In addition a discussion of appropriate roles of teachers and paraprofessionals, sample job descriptions, and issues in developing job descriptions, selection of paraprofessionals, assignment of auxiliary personnel, guidelines for training, and suggestions and techniques for supervision and evaluation of auxiliary personnel are provided. The guide is designed both as a source of information and as a future resource for teachers after completing training.

The second book is a resources and planning guide for developing school programs for auxiliary personnel. Topics include policy statements, development of job descriptions,

alternative training programs for auxiliary personnel and techniques for supervision and evaluation of auxiliary personnel. The intent of this booklet is to provide a set of examples which teachers can utilize or adapt to their own needs. The examples are provided to be of assistance to students in completing the related assignments of the module and as a future resource.

The third written component of the module is a list of selected readings which discuss issues related to use of auxiliary personnel.

Lecture Presentations. All of the major components of the module are delivered through a didactic lecture format. This has the advantage of presenting the information in an organized, structured format for the student. A strength of the format is that more information can be delivered at an awareness level in a short amount of time. Considering the length of time for the module and the awareness/introduction focus, use of this methodology helps the student get an overview of issues and organize their knowledge. Major topical components include:

1) Assumptions about using paraprofessionals includes: rationale and evidence of the effectiveness of auxiliary personnel in special education, needs for adequate training of teachers and auxiliary personnel, purposes for the use of auxiliary personnel, and needs for systematic supervision.

2) Legal and ethical issues in the use of paraprofessionals includes: presentation of state laws and rules regarding auxiliary personnel and professional and ethical issues.

3) Training of paraprofessionals is also included as a lecture topic. Discussion focuses on the need to develop systematic long range staff development orientation, types of training options available, and suggestions for specific content area needs of auxiliary personnel.

4) The final lecture component deals with supervision and evaluation of auxiliary personnel. Subtopics include establishing effective relationships with auxiliary personnel, strategies for orientation, delegating assignments, presenting lesson plans, procedures for data collection, regular planning conferences, strategies for communication, developing on-the-job training and techniques for evaluating the use of auxiliary personnel.

Class Discussion and Interaction. Class discussion and interaction activities are included to provide an opportunity to reinforce material covered in the lecture and reading materials and to provide an opportunity for students to actively participate in the learning process. Two participation activities are included. In the first activity small groups of students are presented with a set of hypothetical situations in which legal and ethical issues in the use of auxiliary personnel are presented. Students are asked to identify the issues and propose a solution to the dilemma. After time is allowed for discussion in small groups, the groups' responses are discussed with the class and the instructor's comments are added.

The second participation activity involves students delivering a short tutor session to another student in the class. This activity emphasizes the importance of properly training auxiliary personnel to tutor effectively and the importance of providing adequate written lesson plans for their use. Principles of effective tutoring can also be discussed in conjunction with the activity.

Class assignments. Students are asked to complete two assignments during the module. Assignments provide a means for accountability, a means to review and reinforce learning, a means of feedback to students on accuracy of their knowledge, and a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the unit. The first assignment requires that the students complete an interview with a teacher and an auxiliary personnel at a practicum site. This activity provides an opportunity for comparison of class information with that in a practicum setting. The activity also helps emphasize the relevance of the topics addressed in the module and demonstrates their practical application. The second assignment is the completion of a written job description. Students are asked to develop a hypothetical job description for a classroom assistant which includes a title, rationale and purpose for the position, qualifications, role description, training requirements, and supervision procedures. This activity provides a practical application of reading materials, class lecture and discussions relative to rationale, roles of auxiliary personnel, training, and supervision. The job description also allows for an assignment which can be tailored

specifically to the type of program in which the student is interested. The assignment allows considerable room for creativity and flexibility on the part of the student in developing a response.

Assessment of Student Knowledge. A final component of the module is a written examination which covers knowledge concerning the content of reading materials, lecture and discussion. The examination is based on a blueprint of the course competencies and is designed to assess the general level of knowledge at an awareness level. The examination again provides the student with feedback on their knowledge and provides the instructor with an evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction. Weaknesses which are identified in the assignments and the assessment of student knowledge can be addressed by the instructor and the student.

Summary

The use of auxiliary personnel, which includes paraprofessionals, volunteers, and peer- and cross-peer tutors, has become prevalent in special education programs. Schools and teacher education programs have not made changes which reflect the skills teachers need to utilize these assistants appropriately and effectively. This response represents one method for incorporating an instructional module into an undergraduate teacher curriculum.

An attempt has been made to design the content and the delivery methodology to be relevant yet realistic in terms of implementation. Although an instructional module approach has been chosen as a means of establishing an identifiable component of the undergraduate teacher education program, issues and topics which relate to auxiliary personnel in other content area courses should also be addressed. Effective utilization of auxiliary personnel shares a number of common elements with other components of the teacher preparation curriculum. In particular, competencies reflecting the use of auxiliary personnel should be included in student teaching activities.

References

Blessing, K. R. (1967). Use of teacher aides in special education: A review and possible applications. Exceptional Children, 34,107-113.

Boomer, L. W. (1980). Special education paraprofessionals: A guide for teachers. Teaching Exceptional Children, 12(4), 146-149.

Boomer, L. W. (1982). The paraprofessional: A valued resource for special children and their teachers. Teaching Exceptional Children, 14(5), 194-197.

Cohen, S. (1968). Use of volunteers in a school for emotionally disturbed children. Exceptional Children, 34(8), 757-759.

Costello, J., & Schoen, J. (1978). The effectiveness of paraprofessionals and a speech clinician as agents of articulation intervention using programmed instruction. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 9, 118-128.

Cowen, E. L., Dorr, D., Sandler, I., & McWilliams, S. (1971). Utilization of non-professional child-aides in the school mental health program. Journal of School Psychology, 9, 131-136.

Cruickshank, W. M., & Haring, N. G. (1957). A demonstration: Assistants for teachers of exceptional children. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Dean, M. A. (1977). The paraprofessional in vocational education programs for disadvantaged and handicapped students. Hope Hull, AL: Link Educational Laboratories. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 143 859).

Escudero, G. R., & Sears, J. (1982). Teachers' and teacher aides' perceptions of their responsibilities when teaching severely and profoundly handicapped students. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 17(3), 190-195.

Frith, G. H., & Lindsey, J. D. (1982). Certification, training, and other programming variables affecting special education and the paraprofessional concept. Journal of Special Education, 16, 229-236.

Gardner, J. M. (1972). Teaching behavior modification to nonprofessionals. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 5(4), 517-521.

Greer, J. V. (1978). Utilizing paraprofessionals and volunteers in special education. Focus on Exceptional Children, 10, 1-15.

Guess, D., Smith, J., & Ensminger, E. (1971). The role of non-professional persons in teaching language skills to mentally retarded children. Exceptional Children, 37, 447-453.

Jenkins, J. R., & Jenkins, L. M. (1981). Cross age and peer tutoring: Help for children with learning problems. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Manning, D. (1979). The reading and math achievement of remedial middle school students taught by teachers versus paraprofessionals. Reading Improvement, 16(1), 35-42.

McKenzie, R. G., & Houk, C. S. (1986). Use of paraprofessionals in the resource room. Exceptional Children, 53(1), 41-45.

National Education Association. (1982). Excellence in our schools: Teacher education an action plan. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Pickett, A. L. (1984). The paraprofessional movement: An update. Social Policy, 14(3), 40-43.

Pickett, A. L. (1986). A training program to prepare paraprofessional personnel to work in special education and related services. New York: CASE/NRC, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

Rouse, B. M., & Farb, J. (1974). Training adolescents to use behavior modification with the severely handicapped. Exceptional Children, 40, 286-288

Scalero, A. M., & Eskenazi, C. (1976). The use of supportive personnel in a public schools speech and language programs. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 7(3), 150-158.

Shortinghuis, M. S., & Froman, A. (1974). A comparison of paraprofessional and professional success with preschool children. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 7(4), 62-64.

Vasa, S. F., Steckelberg, A. L., & Ronning, L. (1982). State of the art assessment of paraprofessional use in special education in Nebraska. Lincoln, NE: Barkley Memorial Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

White, R. (1984). Paraprofessionals in special education. Social Policy, 14(3), 44-47.